



## **Iowa Community Empowerment Fiscal Accountability Report**

*December 2008*

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**Members of the Fiscal Accountability Work Group (a committee of the Iowa Empowerment Board):**

Robin Madison, Legislative Services Agency  
Steve Crew, Department of Education  
Jan Clausen, Department of Human Services  
Calvin McKelvogue, Department of Revenue and Finance  
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**Community Empowerment Staff to the Workgroup:**

Tami Foley, Department of Human Services  
Marcus Johnson, Department of Public Health  
Diane Moore, Department of Education  
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**Legislation asking for report:**

The Iowa empowerment board shall develop and implement a plan to strengthen the fiscal accountability of local areas. The plan shall not include hiring additional staff. The plan shall address fiscal accountability for community empowerment area boards, including but not limited to training for board members and coordinators, and shall address contractual arrangements with and fiscal oversight of program providers.

The plan shall provide for assistance to the community empowerment office and the community empowerment assistance team to improve state fiscal oversight of local boards and ongoing training for community empowerment area boards and coordinators. The Iowa empowerment board and the community empowerment office shall submit a report to the general assembly and the legislative services agency by January 1, 2009.

Since its creation, the Iowa Empowerment Board (IEB) has had a goal for results accountability. Through this goal, a continuous improvement process was developed for both performance and fiscal accountability. Through the Board's leadership, a strategic plan was developed and is delivered through multiple venues. The current strategic plan for 2006-2009 can be found at:

[http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/Common/pdf/strategic\\_plan.pdf](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/Common/pdf/strategic_plan.pdf).

The Iowa Empowerment Board is currently going through a 6-month process to update the strategic plan. The draft goal statements for the strategic plan being developed for 2009-2011 are:

- All empowerment boards will meet state performance and fiscal standards.
- Iowa's early care, health and education system will be evidence-based and collaborative.
- Expand public and private support for Iowa's early care, health and education system.

This report will focus on the planning and subsequent activities supporting fiscal accountability of Iowa Community Empowerment both at state and local levels.

As part of its structure, the Iowa Empowerment Board utilizes the expertise of a Fiscal Accountability Work Group (FAWG) to serve as a committee of the Board. This committee began to meet in November 2000. This following matrix reflects a high level of the necessary planning phases since the 1998 inception of Community Empowerment. Items in the matrix, plus other factors and activities are further described through this report to provide an overview of the Iowa Empowerment Board's ongoing planning efforts.

## Phases of Iowa Community Empowerment Fiscal Accountability Planning

Period of Time	Guidance	Outcomes
<b>Phase 1 – Establishing the structure</b>		
2000 - 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided policy direction on various fiscal items, i.e. liability insurance, interest earned, equipment purchases, audits</li> <li>• Provided policy direction on administrative clarifications</li> <li>• Provided input on Initial annual report template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created the IEB Fiscal Accountability Workgroup to address ongoing fiscal issues</li> <li>• Created tools on fiscal clarifications, liability insurance and administrative clarifications</li> <li>• Developed and implemented an Annual Report template</li> <li>• Utilized initial formula for School Ready funding</li> <li>• Implemented Community Empowerment (CE) statewide</li> </ul>

Period of Time	Guidance	Outcomes
<b>Phase 2 – Making Policy Adjustments</b>		
2002 - 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided guidance as requested, FAWG meets on an ad hoc basis</li> <li>• Provided input on questions from CE boards</li> <li>• Provided guidance regarding confidential items not to be included as data for payment of invoices from providers</li> <li>• Provided guidance on conflict of interest issues</li> <li>• Proposed a transition funding formula to promote equity to all area boards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised annual report template developed for local board submittal</li> <li>• Developed policy guidance regarding confidential items on claims from service providers</li> <li>• Developed policy guidance for boards to address conflicts of interest</li> <li>• Reviewed transition funding formula and then implemented through a four year process</li> </ul>
Period of Time	Guidance	Outcomes
<b>Phase 3 – Policies as Funding Substantially Expands</b>		
2006 - 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended changes in the current fiscal agent agreement template provided to local areas</li> <li>• Recommended whether or not local CE areas should be required to use the fiscal agent agreement template</li> <li>• Recommended training for local board representatives and fiscal agents regarding fiscal accountability and (sub) contracting</li> <li>• Recommended who should pay for special audits at the local level, i.e., a local board requesting an audit of a subcontractor</li> <li>• Recommended changes in the annual budget proposals and annual fiscal reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented stronger language in the fiscal agent agreement template</li> <li>• Encouraged the use of the fiscal agent template</li> <li>• Developed a coordinator training series that includes training items on development of RFP processes and stronger contract language</li> <li>• Recommended local CE boards must cover audit or fiscal review costs with administrative funds.</li> <li>• Reviewed and strengthened budget forms templates and annual financial statements</li> </ul>
Spring 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided input through FAWG on fiscal tools and provided guidance to strengthen empowerment reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted a fiscal survey was to better understand the current fiscal infrastructure at the local level</li> <li>• Adopted and implemented a stronger process for Re-Designation</li> </ul>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed a financial tracking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted the pilot training</li> </ul>

	<p>sheet to assist boards that do not have an efficient process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a process for the local level boards to provide a financial update to the State Technical Assistance Team semi-annually.</li> </ul>	<p>series for Community Empowerment Coordinators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented a new budget review process</li> <li>Implemented a revised re-designation process, first year of the three-year process</li> <li>Released a spreadsheet to track funding expenditures. The spreadsheet was shared with all boards as an option to strengthen accountability.</li> <li>November 2008, the Iowa Empowerment Board adopted a policy for CEA Boards to submit a mid-year financial update to the Office of Empowerment.</li> </ul>
Period of Time	Guidance	Outcomes
<b>Phase 4 – Plan for Increasing Fiscal Accountability Supports (2009 – 2010)</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to explore options for making regional fiscal agents available as an option.</li> <li>Develop a training for CEA Coordinators on conducting program-level fiscal reviews.</li> <li>Refine standards of operations to strengthen fiscal accountability.</li> <li>Develop easier electronic access of fiscal tools and supports.</li> <li>Release contract templates for CEA use.</li> </ul>	

## **Presenting the Plan and Subsequent Activities in more Detail**

### **Phase 1 – Establishing the Structure**

During the first years of Community Empowerment, the Iowa Empowerment Board requested assistance from the FAWG to assist with the initial phase of implementation of the legislation to create an infrastructure that adheres to the legislated intent. The committee consisted of both Board members and state-agency representatives with strong fiscal experience to address fiscal issues that would arise with the increase of funds. This work group assisted the Board in promoting a partnership between state and local level activities to address accountability.

In this initial phase of the planning, the FAWG group assisted the Board with general fiscal questions. Specifically, issues around interest earned and how to report it, mileage reimbursement, liability insurance, and auditing questions were discussed by the FAWG. Recommendations were made by the FAWG to the Iowa Empowerment Board and the Office of Empowerment. From those recommendations, tools were developed and shared with local boards to build consistency and support policy. The following is a link to the fiscal tools that have been created.

[http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/common/pdf/kit\\_tools/toolH.pdf](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/common/pdf/kit_tools/toolH.pdf)

Because monitoring was not legislated to be a part of the Empowerment process, but results accountability was a must, the Iowa Empowerment Board and FAWG provided guidance on a process to reflect how Community Empowerment boards will implement their locally developed plan. After each fiscal year, annual reports are submitted to provide an account of the activities that happened in regards to children 0 to 5 years and their families. This information was supported through a fiscal report and a performance measures report utilizing Accountable Government Act format of reporting.

## **Phase 2 – Making Policy Adjustments**

During the next phase, once Community Empowerment was represented statewide, the Iowa Empowerment Board, Fiscal Accountability Workgroup (FAWG) and members of the Iowa Legislature worked to promote a funding formula for the School Ready Grants funding. This ensured an equitable distribution of funding to all Iowa communities.

The FAWG met on an as-needed basis and provided guidance on more specific issues that were being addressed by Community Empowerment boards. One example of this issue was the development of policy guidance regarding confidential items on claims from service providers. Guidance was developed in partnership with legal counsel and provided to local boards. Also during this phase, the FAWG provided guidance to revise the annual report template developed for local board submittal. The template included more detailed information of local board investments and the results accountability for those investments. Policy guidance for boards to address conflicts of interest was developed and implemented as well.

Much time was spent to develop the transition funding formula. It was implemented through a four year process.

## **Phase 3 – Policies as Funding Substantially Expands**

During Fiscal Year '06, as Community Empowerment funding experienced substantial growth, the Iowa Empowerment Board observed that this increase in funding gave reason to review both state and local level infrastructure. This began the third phase of the Fiscal Accountability Plan.

The additional funds received had requirements as to how and on what they could be expended. This required community boards to track these funds separately. As part of their fact finding and planning, the IEB reconvened the Fiscal Accountability Work Group (FAWG). Utilizing input from the FAWG had proven itself as an effective strategy in the past.

**FAWG Recommendations:**

Since November 2006, this workgroup has been meeting on a regular basis. The following are issues that the Iowa Empowerment Board asked the FAWG to address:

1. Recommended changes in the current fiscal agent agreement template provided to local areas
2. Recommendation of whether or not local CE areas should be required to use the fiscal agent agreement template
3. Recommended training would be for local board representatives and fiscal agents regarding fiscal accountability and (sub) contracting
4. Recommendation regarding who should pay for special audits at the local level, i.e., a local board requesting an audit of a subcontractor
5. Recommended changes in the annual budget proposals and annual fiscal reports.

In January 2007, the FAWG responded to the Iowa Empowerment Board's request in the form of a report. The following is a link to the January 2007 FAWG Report:

[http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/common/pdf/advisory\\_council/fiscal/jan\\_07\\_report.pdf](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/common/pdf/advisory_council/fiscal/jan_07_report.pdf)

In the report, the FAWG made the following recommendations to the issues listed above to the Iowa Empowerment Board:

1. Recommended changes in the current fiscal agent agreement template provided to local areas.
  - The local board requires a fidelity bond based on the amount of money placed in the fiscal agents trust equal to at least 50 percent of the award amount
  - Insert certification language regarding debarment and lobbying as fiscal agents are handling federal (Early Childhood) funds
  - Begin the rule making process to reflect fidelity bonding
2. Recommendation of whether or not local CE areas should be required to use the fiscal agent agreement template.
  - Local boards should not be restricted to using the template, but should be provided to them to customize to meet local needs.
  - If a local board chooses to create their own agreement, it must include all elements of the required components of the template.



3. Recommended training would be for local board representatives and fiscal agents regarding fiscal accountability and (sub) contracting.
  - Fiscal management information and procedures will be incorporated into the emerging Community Empowerment coordinator training series.
4. Recommendation regarding who should pay for special audits at the local level, i.e., a local board requesting an audit of a subcontractor.
  - This item still required additional discussion at the time the report was shared.
5. Recommended changes in the annual budget proposals and annual fiscal reports.
  - Budget and end-of-year fiscal reports will be revised as recommended to include a column for 'other funds', beginning in FY 2008, to allow for definitions, guidance and reasonable implementation by the local areas.

In addition to the request by the IEB, the FAWG identified other items for discussion:

- Fair and reasonable fiscal agent fees, including regional fiscal agent concepts
- Special audit fees
- Performance Audits (Pilots)
- Disbursement of funds (to maintain local services) in the case of a board disbanding or unable to enter into an agreement

The FAWG continues to meet on a regular basis. FAWG discussed a recommendation to the Iowa Empowerment Board to make significant changes regarding fiscal agency policies and the Code around fiscal agents. The group also discussed the option of a regional fiscal agency structure and how this strategy could help struggling areas without dismantling structures that work in other areas. One of the members of the Fiscal Accountability Work Group summed things up by saying this Committee is not trying to take away local control; it is trying to lessen local liability.

The recommendations were shared with the IEB. The IEB asked the FAWG to do more research and get local input on solutions to fiscal issues. They suggested the possibility of incorporating a financial review in conjunction with the legislated Re-designation process.

**Redesignation Process:**

In FY '07, the FAWG reviewed recommendations from the State Technical Assistance Team to strengthen the process for a Community Empowerment Area board to become re-designated. The new process for re-designation is a 3-year process, utilizing an in-depth review of one-third of the Community Empowerment Areas each year. An enhanced process was developed and shared with the IEB to be effective in FY '08 to re-designate Community Empowerment boards. The process included a review of a community plan for children 0-5 and their families, the board's bylaws, the local CE board's minutes from the previous four meetings and the annual report. Two members of the State Technical Assistance Team reviewed the materials and met with the CE boards and their partners in a local site for a two and a half hour meeting.

The addition of reviewing bylaws and minutes during re-designation is directly related to the guidance FAWG received from the State Auditors office in regards to a request about what would a regular audit cover. The FAWG discovered that because empowerment would be considered a program of the fiscal agent, it would not receive intensive auditing unless specifically requested. Board operations would not be audited in the current scenario. Adding the bylaws and minutes to the re-designation process helped overcome that weakness. This has really proven to be continuous improvement process for all involved. Information regarding the Re-designation guidelines and process can be found at:

<http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/redesignation.asp>

During 2007, the FAWG reviewed current fiscal-related tools that have been developed to provide community empowerment guidance. Tools are available on the state Empowerment website for easy access at:

[http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/tool\\_kit\\_tools.asp](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/tool_kit_tools.asp)

**Carryforward:**

In May 2007, the Iowa Empowerment Board was directed through legislation to identify and apply limitations on the carryforward of school ready children grant funding. The limitations were to address an unusually high percentage of a grant being carried forward, the number of years a grant has been carried forward which shall not exceed three years, and other objective criteria. After many discussions and review of various scenarios, the Iowa Empowerment Board adopted a policy allowing a 30 percent carryforward limitation. At the close of the 2008 Legislative Session, legislation lowered the carryforward limit to 20 percent.

Because of these discussions, Community Empowerment both at a state and a local level have determined that stronger fiscal practices are necessary. Locally, boards are more closely monitoring their contracts with providers to ensure progress is achieved in the programs, services, activities that are being funded. At the state level an example of developing stronger fiscal practices is the Iowa Empowerment Board and State Technical Assistance Team have adopted a state-level policy for local boards to submit a mid-year financial update.

**Other activities of the FAWG:**

In May 2007, an electronic fiscal survey was sent to Community Empowerment Coordinators. Questions included information about the following:

- Fiscal agent fees
- High level overview of fiscal agent's role
- Frequency of fiscal agent reports/updates to the Board
- Fiscal Agent role in completing financial pages submitted to the State in the annual report
- Specifics regarding contracting
- Does your board need additional information regarding audits or special audits?
- Is your fiscal agent bonded currently?
- Does your board purchase liability insurance? With whom do you have your policy and what does your board pay for this policy?
- Do you have additional questions or comments regarding the local board's financial responsibilities?

From information gleaned in the survey, immediate technical assistance was offered to those areas that completed any of the information that was questionable. An example of immediate technical assistance was that four empowerment areas reported not having liability insurance. In that scenario, state technical assistance members contact the CEAs to inquire and provide guidance about the local liability and ensuring that coverage was procured. To further assist with this issue, during a quarterly technical assistance session for Empowerment Coordinators, persons from reputable insurance agents shared information with coordinators regarding policies, coverage issues, etc. This information was well received.

**Phase 4 – Plan for Increasing Fiscal Accountability Supports  
(2009 – 2010)**

In the next phase of the fiscal accountability plan, the Iowa Empowerment Board, with input from the Fiscal Accountability Workgroup and the State Technical Assistance Team will address the following:

- Oversight of program providers – we are looking forward to addressing this issue as we weren't able to fully review and assess the current status. As we move forward with this area of fiscal accountability, we will develop a process to include both local board members and providers of service in the conversations. This is a strategy being discussed to allow for strengthened local accountability. Funds would be available to local boards to support them in conducting fiscal reviews of the local providers to assure appropriate use of Empowerment funding at the local level.

- Re-evaluate the option of regional fiscal agent. It may be considered an option for local boards that need a stronger fiscal agent or for smaller boards as an option to share fiscal agent expenses.
- Continue conversations regarding having providers that receive empowerment funding to rotate off local boards. A non-financial reason for board member representation should be sought.
- Address standards of operation for fiscal issues, including development of strong RFPs and contract language.
- Funding for legal resources/ attorney and accountant fees for fiscal reviews/audits
- Reorganization of the guidance tools on the website for easy access. This will include organizing under 'board operations' and 'fiscal operations'. Input and feedback is being sought from both local boards and the coordinators.
- A budget amendment process is being developed by the State TA Team. Input was been provided by the FAWG Group and the Community Empowerment Coordinators. It will be in place by January 2009.
- Contract templates were drafted for local board use and are awaiting approval of Community Empowerment legal counsel.
- Enhance training and tools regarding categorical funding
- Review the formula for both the School Ready and the Early Childhood funding to ensure equity for rural and urban communities, as well as single county and multiple county CEAs.

## **The Role of the State Technical Assistance Team**

Many recommendations have been implemented since the January 2007 FAWG report. Primarily, the State Empowerment Technical Assistance Team members serve as staff to support Community Empowerment at the state level. Because liability is legislated to be at the local level, the state does not serve as a monitoring body, but rather provides supports, guidance and state parameters in order to implement the legislation.

The State Technical Assistance (TA) Team represents the following: Two and a half fulltime staff from the Department of Management, one fulltime person from the Department of Human Services and a .50 FTE donated from the Departments of Economic Development, Education, Human Rights, Public Health and Workforce Development. The State TA Team provides assistance to all community empowerment boards and serves as staff to the Iowa Empowerment Board. Representation from Economic Development, Education, Human Rights, Public Health and Workforce Development is donated by those state agencies as an in-kind contribution to Community Empowerment.

As part of their role, the State TA Team went through an extensive process to re-look at the assistance provided to community boards and their partners. As part of the legislated model to serve as a partner to the local boards, a continual improvement process has been one of the State TA Team's hallmarks. Below is a description of items that were reviewed, redesigned, or developed and implemented.

- Redesignation Review – (already described above). A thorough review to strengthen this legislated process.
- Annual Report Review – The State TA team reviewed and worked to build consistency into the policy and procedure for reviewing annual reports. A technical review of financial statements was incorporated into the process. Formulas were placed in the financial statement templates to assist in the completion of the forms. All annual reports are reviewed by the State TA Team and feedback is provided to the local board. This information is made available through the State Empowerment Web site.
- For the past five years, to further promote performance accountability, the Iowa Empowerment Board has worked diligently to encourage and support local boards in making funding decisions in evidence-based practices. Statewide performance measures are now required in some of the categorical funding to Community Empowerment.
- FY '09 - Budget Review Process: Budgets are submitted by the local CE boards at the beginning of each fiscal year. CEA are to submit a budget that accounts for all the funding appropriated to a local area. Budget tips were developed to assist the Boards with legislated requirements. The new process requires that each budget be reviewed by at least two State TA Team members. To further support the accountability of this process, timeframes were set for submittal and review time. The team members from the Departments of Education and Human Services took the lead of the budget review, with all team members being a part of the review process. When questions occurred, empowerment areas were contacted for clarification. A special review all of SR budgets concentrating on the Family Support section was also incorporated to ensure the legislation for those funds was adhered.
- The State TA Team took a lead role in reviewing and updating each empowerment tool (written guidance in the form of a toolkit) provided to local boards as described above. The online tools can be found at: [http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/tool\\_kit\\_tools.asp](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/tool_kit_tools.asp)
- Tracking the funding – To respond to recommendations of the Fiscal Accountability Work Group, the State Technical Assistance Team gathered information from local boards as to their process of tracking the funding they receive through the Empowerment funding streams. From those examples shared, a template was developed that includes a spreadsheet for monthly tracking of the budget and expenditures. It was determined by the Iowa Empowerment not to require the form to be used, but rather share as an available tool for local boards that do not have a monitoring process in place that meets their needs. This template was shared with local boards during FY '09 and has received positive comments.
- Mid-year Reporting – Another example of implementing a recommendation from the Fiscal Accountability Work Group is the policy for mid-year fiscal reporting. The Mid-year reporting policy was adopted by the Iowa Empowerment Board in November 2008 and will be implemented beginning January 2009. This policy promotes an opportunity for local CE boards to connect with the State TA Team regarding financial matters. If a CE board

has noticeably high carryover, technical assistance will be set up to develop a plan with the board to spend down their funds.

- The fiscal agent agreement template was updated to include language that requires a fidelity bond based on the amount of money placed in the fiscal agents trust equal to at least 50 percent of the award amount and includes certification language regarding debarment and lobbying as fiscal agents are handling federal (Early Childhood) funds.
- Fiscal management information and procedures was incorporated into a training series developed for Community Empowerment coordinators. This four module training was piloted during FY '08 over a four month period, with one day per month. The training will be revised based on feedback from Coordinators that attended. Training on developing strong competitive bid processes, basic contract language, completing annual financial statements are included in this training series.
- Although a decision wasn't made regarding the payment of audits, during FY '07 and '08, there were circumstances that required community empowerment boards to acquire legal and financial services to conduct a fiscal review of programs. These expenses were covered at the local level.

## **The Role of Local Empowerment Coordinators**

Community Empowerment Coordinators at a local level serve to:

- Carryout functions of local boards
- Meet legal requirements of meetings
- Conduct contractual relations with providers on behalf of the board.
- Work with the fiscal agent to ensure accurate spending and tracking of the funding
- Serve as a contact person for the empowerment area, and work with early childhood partners on collaboration and coordination in their CEA

As a whole, this group also serves in an advisory capacity to the State TA Team and the Iowa Empowerment Board. Historically, this helped build strong policy that works for all. Through the years, various assessments regarding coordination support for CEAs have been conducted.

Connecting with the State Empowerment TA Team. Much of the CEA correspondence with the State TA team is conducted through emails. Coordinators assist in local implementation of any legislated items. Currently quarterly technical assistance sessions are hosted by the State TA Team with a high percentage of coordinators attending. These sessions allow a face to face opportunity to discuss issues, ask questions regarding guidance, provide input on draft policies, etc.

The *Iowa Community Empowerment Newsletter*, a bi-monthly electronic statewide newsletter is also shared with coordinators. This newsletter is another way to assist the coordinator in their role to connect local-level and state-level early childhood activities. The newsletter can be found on the Web site at:

[http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/empowerment\\_news.asp](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/empowerment_news.asp).

Community Empowerment as a whole has more than doubled in its state appropriation over the past two years but the infrastructure has not grown at the same pace. Added responsibilities are at both the local and at the state level. With that increase in funds and responsibility at the local level, boards are turning more to the state technical assistance team for assistance and guidance. Accountability is vital and evidenced through local board's planning and implementation. They request and rely on the State Technical Assistance Team to serve as that necessary partner to assist them with the work.

### **Training Opportunities (FY '08 and FY '09)**

The State Technical Assistance Team has coordinated various training opportunities over the years. Below is a compilation of professional development activities that occurred during FY '08 and/or will be provided in FY '09. This compilation of training and supports exemplifies the partnership role played between state and local level Community Empowerment to build a stronger system.

- Coordinator Module Training – Piloted in FY '08 (described above). The training will be offered in the Spring and Fall of 2009.
- Results-Based Accountability Training – This training is designed for local board members, coordinators and service providers working with local boards. The training utilizes a model designed by Mark Friedman and addresses community-wide indicators (population data) with performance measure data that specifically looks at investments made by the boards. This training was provided to areas by request and will be provided regionally in 2009.
- Board Development – This training is provided to empowerment boards as well as other early childhood boards. In addition to basic board functions, information from the law specific to CEA boards is reviewed.
- Standards of Operation (for Coordinators, Board members and Fiscal Agents) – this training will be developed during 2009.
- Board Ethics Training – This newly developed training will be piloted in January 2009. The goal of this workshop is to have an open discussion about what our ethical responsibilities are, discuss specific ethical issues, and learn some appropriate ways to handle these issues when they arise.
- Coordinator orientation – A formal training has been developed for new coordinators and is conducted as necessary.
- Quarterly technical assistance sessions are designed for the State TA Team to connect with coordinators. Information is shared, reviewed and then taken back to local boards. Coordinators have networking time during each session.
- Beginning in FY '09 – A small portion of funding will be utilized by community empowerment coordinators to participate in a professional development opportunity that meets their individual needs. The funding

supporting this program is through the state-level professional development funding for the early care, health and education system. Funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis through an application process.

- Open Records/Open Meetings Law – Based on the most-recent re-designation process, many requests for Open Records/Open Meetings Law training has been requested. The Office of Empowerment is looking to local or regional-level providers to provide this training in 2009.